

NEWS RELEASE

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UNIQUE HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN WILL BENEFIT NATIVE FISH

MISSOULA, MT: Plum Creek Timber Company, Inc. and two federal agencies today signed a unique Habitat Conservation Plan that will benefit 17 species of native fish for the next 30 years.

The signing ceremony included Plum Creek President and CEO Rick R. Holley, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, and representatives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service. The Native Fish Habitat Conservation Plan provides for fish protection over the next 30 years while allowing Plum Creek's economic activities to continue on their 1.6 million acres of forestlands in Washington, Idaho, and Montana.

"This historic HCP is a continuation of our leadership in environmentally responsible resource management," said Plum Creek President and CEO Rick R. Holley. "Our Native Fish Habitat Conservation Plan not only conserves native fish populations on our lands and in the region, but it also provides certainty and predictability for our business. This plan is based on an unprecedented level of scientific rigor, and the adaptive management provisions assure future decisions will be based on the same high level of scientific excellence."

"All across the West, native fish populations have been under tremendous pressure from environmental factors only we can change," Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt said. "Time and again, I've seen that where we've made even modest efforts to restore watersheds, the fish come back. This ambitious Native Fish HCP lays down a new standard of what we can do in partnership. Its legacy will be that all of us may one day take our grandchildren to see the magnificent sight of wild trout and salmon in cold, clear rivers."

The plan incorporates a significant amount of state-of-the-art scientific information and research from a number of leading scientists. In addition, Plum Creek will conduct a number of research and monitoring efforts to assure the plan's effectiveness.

"We are pleased to implement a Native Fish HCP that will work toward providing cold, clean, complex and connected fish habitat on Plum Creek lands," remarked U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Director, Anne Badgley.

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Plum Creek



“This conservation plan takes an innovative, creative approach to habitat protection,” said Donna Darm, acting administrator for the National Marine Fisheries Service’s Northwest region in Seattle. “Of great importance are the flexibilities built into the plan to take advantage of new information and make us confident it will provide substantial benefits to fish and wildlife well into the future.”

A Habitat Conservation Plan is an agreement between the federal government and a private landowner under which the landowner is issued an “incidental take permit” that authorizes some impacts to species protected under the Endangered Species Act in exchange for long-term protection of those species and their habitat on the landowner’s property.

The Plum Creek Native Fish HCP is the first habitat planning effort of its kind in the northern Rockies. It will conserve native fish habitat on 1.6 million acres of Plum Creek land in Montana, Idaho and Washington through implementation of 56 different conservation commitments. Almost 90% of the area covered by the plan — about 1.5 million acres — occurs in Montana; 80,000 acres are in Washington and 40,000 acres are in Idaho. It specifies measures to conserve 17 native fish species, including eight species that are threatened or endangered, for a permit length of 30 years. The Native Fish HCP adopts a multi-species aquatic ecosystem approach, spanning all watersheds within the Project Area. All of Plum Creek’s land management activities, including timber harvesting, road building, and land sales are governed by the plan.

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 93-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses 530 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 66 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

The National Marine Fisheries Service is the principal steward of the nation’s living marine resources. It protects marine and anadromous species under the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act. An agency of the Commerce Department’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NMFS also regulates the nation’s commercial and recreational fisheries. It manages species under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act throughout federal waters, which extend 200 miles from the coastline.

Plum Creek, a real estate investment trust (REIT), is the fourth largest timberland owner in the nation, with timberlands and mills located in the Northwest, South and Northeast regions of the United States. On July 18, Plum Creek announced an agreement to merge with The Timber Company, a separate operating group of Georgia-Pacific Corporation, which will create the second largest timberland owner in the U.S., with approximately 7.9 million acres.